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Message Text

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PAGE 01 BAGHDA 00591 231112Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 ACDA-12 HA-05 SSM-03 IO-13 DRC-01
/106 W
----------101242 231143Z /10/14
R 180726Z MAR 78
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5860
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0591

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN 0591 VICE 0592)

FOR NEA/RA AND NEA/ARN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, IZ, US
SUBJ: VISIT TO BAGHDAD OF NEA/RA
DIRECTOR PALMER

1. PALMER AND ACTING P.O. HAD MEETING OF OVER ONE HOUR ON MARCH 14 WITH FIRST INTERNATIONAL DEPT. CHIEF ZAHAWI AND ARAB DEPT. CHIEF ZAYBAK. DISCUSSIONS, WHICH REVEALED NOTHING PARTICULARLY NEW ABOUT SUBSTANCE OF IRAQI POSITIONS, RANGED OVER CONVENTIONAL ARMS SALES POLICY, INDIAN OCEAN NEGOTIATIONS, GULF SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS. ZAYBAK PROBED GENTLY BUT PERSISTENTLY FOR ANY INDICATION THAT USG SUPPORTS SCHEMES FOR GULF SECURITY PACTS. INEVITABLY, ZAHAWI STEERED DISCUSSION TO IRAQI PERCEPTION OF TOTAL USG SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL.

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2. ALTHOUGH MEETING DID NOT PLOW ANY NEW GROUND, FACT IT TOOK PLACE AT ALL IS NOTEWORTHY. MFA INTER-LOCUTORS WERE CORDIAL THROUGHOUT AND CLEARLY WELCOMED CHANCE TO DISCUSS ISSUES WITH AN OFFICIAL FROM WASHINGTON. EARLIER AND SOMEWHAT TO OUR SURPRISE, MFA HAD OPENED VIP ROOM AND HAD PROTOCOL OFFICIAL ON HAND FOR PALMER'S ARRIVAL.

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3. ZAHAWI MAY HAVE INDICATED ROOT OF IRAQI INTEREST
IN MAINTAINING DIALOGUE WITH USG WHEN, AT
CONCLUSION OF MEETING, HE REFERRED TO DESCRIPTION OF
IRAQ AS "COMMUNIST ALIGNED" WHICH APPEARED
IN A CONGRESSIONAL STAFF REPORT. ZAHAWI ASKED WHETHER
DESCRIPTION REFLECTED USG PERCEPTION OF IRAQ. IN
RESPONSE TO PALMER'S ASSURANCE THAT IT DID NOT,
THE NORMALLY COOL AND DISTANT ZAHAWI DELIVERED AN
EMPHATIC STATEMENT OF IRAQ'S ATTACHMENT TO NATIONAL
INDEPENDENCE AND ITS DETERMINATION TO AVOID ALIGNMENT
WITH ANY BIG POWER.

4. COMMENT: PALMER'S VISIT WAS TIMELY. AS INDICATED
IN PREVIOUS REPORTING, THERE ARE STRAINS IN CURRENT
RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAQ AND SOVIET UNION. IRAQI
REGIME MAY HAVE DECIDED THIS WAS APPROPRIATE TIME TO
REASSURE ITSELF THAT A MODEST DIALOGUE WITH USG
IS STILL POSSIBLE AND TO SSND MESSAGE THAT IT IS
NOT DEPENDENT ON SOVIETS.
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Message Attributes

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